Train-the-Trainer Session: Workshops for Writing Effective Performance Objectives

DCIPS
DEFENSE CIVILIAN INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL SYSTEM

Welcome

- Agenda
  - Session Goals
  - Writing Effective Performance Objectives Workshop
  - Review of Instructor Guide and Workshop Protocol
  - Instructor Resources
  - Common Challenges
  - Reviewing and Editing Objectives

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Session Goals

- Provide complete instruction on how to conduct a workshop on writing performance objectives
  - Lead the group through a simulation of the workshop, modeling how it should be conducted
- Provide resources and instruction on setting a workshop up for success and handling common workshop challenges
- Obtain feedback on the train-the-trainer session

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Introductions

- Name
- Job or role

- Past experience leading training
- Past experience and challenges with writing performance objectives

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Writing Effective Performance Objectives Workshop

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Welcome

- Thank you for being here today
- Agenda
  - Introductions
  - Workshop Goals
  - DCIPS Background
  - Performance Objective Writing Refresher
  - Practice Writing Objectives
  - Review and Finalize Objectives

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Introductions

- Name
- Job or role

- Past experience and challenges with writing performance objectives

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Workshop Goals

- The goals of this workshop are to:
  - Teach a step-by-step process for writing effective performance objectives
  - Offer tips for addressing common challenges employees and supervisors face when writing performance objectives
  - Provide resources that can be used by employees and supervisors outside of the workshop to write additional objectives and evaluate accomplishments at the end of the rating period
    - Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives
    - Objective Writing Template
    - Performance Objectives Repository

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Performance Management

- The purpose of performance management is to…
  - Clarify job responsibilities and expectations
  - Enhance productivity
  - Develop employees' skills and abilities through ongoing feedback and coaching
  - Provide a basis for making human capital decisions
  - Improve communication between employees and managers

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DCIPS Performance Objectives

- Performance objectives are a key component of performance management under DCIPS

- DCIPS calls for alignment of individual performance objectives with goals and objectives of the agency/organization and the National Intelligence Strategy
  - Their inclusion is meant to ensure that employees understand what results they are expected to achieve and how these individual-level results ultimately contribute to the mission

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Additional Background

- *This is a placeholder for an optional slide.*
- *You may want to insert additional work unit-specific information here*
  - *Examples:*
    - *Work unit-specific policies/guidance*
    - *Work unit higher level goals/objectives to which individuals should link their objectives*
    - *Resources the work unit has developed (e.g., example objectives)*
    - *Dates/deadlines for completing performance plans*

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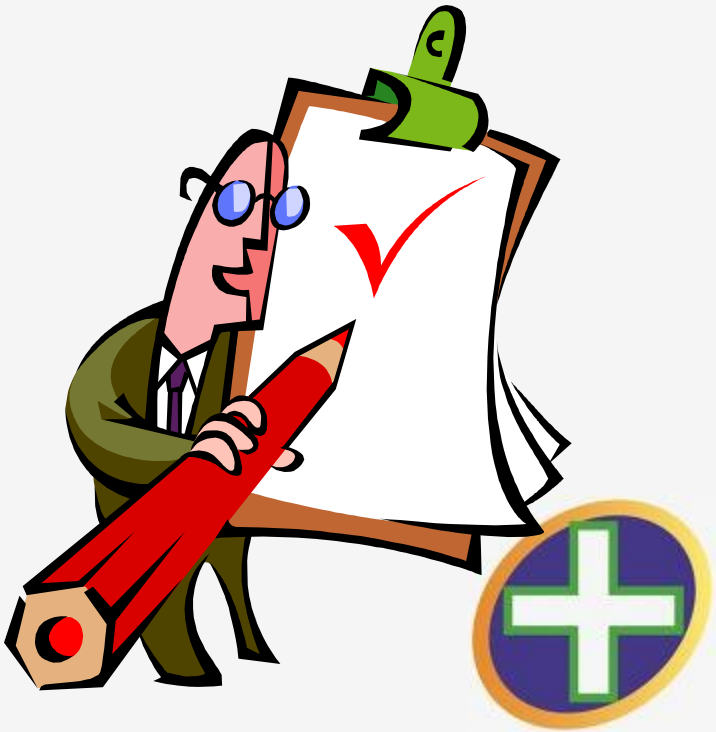
Writing SMART+ Performance Objectives

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Relevant
- Time-bound
- “Plus”



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What Are Objectives?

Task description

- Focus on activity
- Process

Example: Type a report.

Objective

- Focus on result
- Outcome

Example: Produce a report that is consistent with style guidelines and meets standards for quality as determined by supervisory review.

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Types of Objectives

Recurring Objectives

- Part of an employee's daily work, but are unforeseen in terms of volume and timing
- Examples:
  - Review all incoming threat assessments regarding Cuba
  - Provide a qualitative review of all draft responses to inquiries

Non-Recurring Objectives

- Objectives with an identifiable end date
- Examples:
  - Independently produce a report documenting recommended changes to the current tracking system based on a thorough review of the process by the end of the second quarter. (Organizational Goal #2)

Both types of objectives should meet the SMART criteria.

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What Are SMART Objectives?

S

M

A

R

T

Specific ⟶

Questions to help determine if your objective is specific:

1. Is the result observable?
2. Can a supervisor verify the result?
3. What would the result look like?

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What Are SMART Objectives?

S Specific

M Measurable

A

R

T

Common Types of Measurement:

- Quantity
  (e.g., raw numbers, percentages)
- Quality
  (e.g., accuracy, effectiveness)
- Time
  (e.g., within 3 months)
- Cost-Effectiveness
  (e.g., dollars saved, time saved)

What Are SMART Objectives?

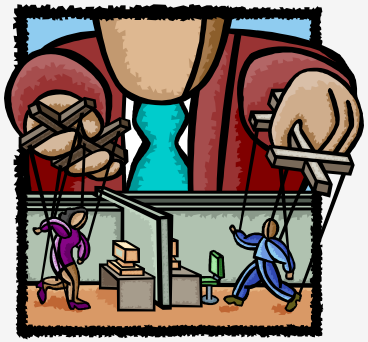
S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

R

T



Questions to Consider:

1. Can the objective be achieved with the available resources and within the given timeframe?
2. Is the work in the objective within the individual's control to complete?
3. Is the objective appropriate for the individual's experience, skill, and work level?
4. Is the objective appropriate for the job position?

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What Are SMART Objectives?

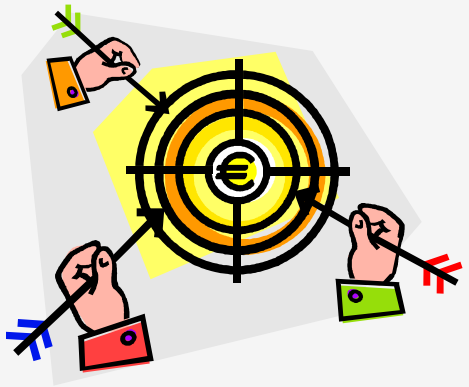
S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

R Relevant

T



Establish relevance to:

- Employee's job
- Rater's objectives
- Work unit's goals
- Organization's goals

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What Are SMART Objectives?

S Specific

M Measurable

A Achievable

R Relevant

T Time-bound

Examples:

- 15 March 09
- Within six months
- End of the quarter
- End of evaluation period

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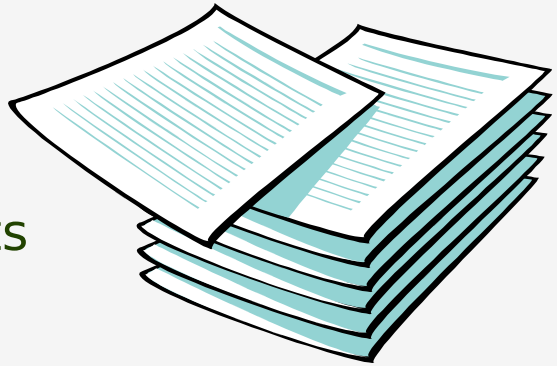
How Do We Write “SMART+” Objectives?

Helpful Materials and Resources

- Before you start writing, it is important to gather several types of information related to your job:
  - Position descriptions
  - Duty statements
  - Performance examples
  - Standard operating procedures
  - Directives or other guidance documents
  - Supervisor objectives
  - Work unit goals or objectives
  - Organizational-level goals
  - Defense Intelligence Strategy or other national level strategy documents
  - Performance Objectives Repository



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Guide to Writing "SMART +" Performance Objectives

1. Make a list of the most important job duties or work activities for the job
    - Activities that are performed most often
    - Activities that are critical to supporting the mission
    - Activities that are key to supporting other jobs
2. Choose an activity for which you want to write an objective
    - Write down the *end result* of the work activity
    - Identify the person's role in achieving the end result (e.g., oversee, manage, produce)

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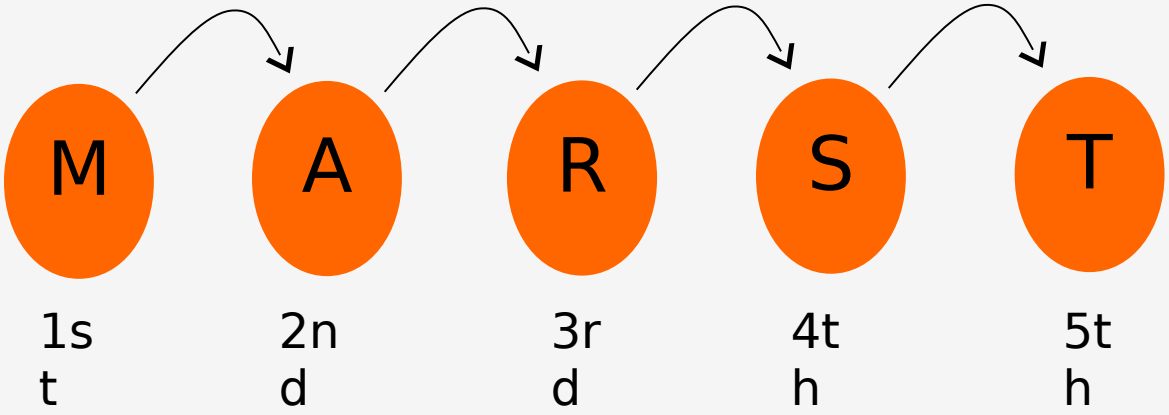
Guide to Writing “SMART +” Performance Objectives

3. Capture key elements by using the SMART framework
   - It can help to change the sequence



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Guide to Writing “SMART +” Performance Objectives

4. Make the objective clear to an external audience
    - Avoid the use of technical jargon or acronyms
    - Provide one or two sentences that describe background or project-related information
5. Write the objective at the “Successful” level of performance
    - Refer to the *Work Level Descriptions* table in your guidebook (page 18)
    - Refer to the *Accomplishment Evaluation Criteria* table in your guidebook (page 22)

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“SMART +” Checklist

See page 13 of your guidebook.

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Example 1

- Analysis and Production (Senior)

  In support of the command's goals to improve its production timelines and quality assurance, independently compile a submission requirements and writing standard operating procedure (SOP) that delineates acceptable procedures for analysts. The document should combine Intelligence Community (IC) standards and standards unique to the Army in a single-source reference. Submit the document to supervisor for review by 1 March. Supervisory revisions of final product should be minimal. Accomplishment is achieved when SOP is released for final signature by the appropriate signature authority.

  - What makes it SMART+?
  - What needs to be changed?

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Example 2

- Training

  With direct supervisory guidance, contribute as a team member to ensure that the curriculum is relevant, conveys appropriate information, adheres to policies, and makes effective and efficient use of resources.

  - What is the appropriate work level for this objective?
  - Is it SMART+?
  - What needs to be changed?

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Group-Generated Example

- Choose an occupation and work level (Refer to a job description)
- Identify a major job duty or work activity
- Identify the outcome/result of that work activity
  - Is it observable and measurable?
- Make it achievable and realistic for the job level
- How does it align to organizational goals? (Refer to your organizational goals)
- Ensure there are specific requirements of the outcome/result and give a reasonable time frame
- Refer to the checklist for improving objectives

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Practice Writing Objectives

- Practice writing at least two performance objectives for your own job
- Use the resources you brought with you and follow the steps for developing a high-quality performance objective:
  - Identify key work activities and outcomes for your job
  - Choose one outcome and follow the MARST process to turn it into an objective
  - Use the checklist and guidebook provided to evaluate and revise your objective
- Use the performance objective writing template provided
  - The template provides spaces for you to breakdown the objective and ensure you are covering each aspect of the SMART criteria
- Remember to make objectives as “SMART+” as possible

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Peer Review

- Answer the following questions:
  - Can the objective be understood without having in-depth knowledge of the job (i.e., the objective is clearly written without acronyms)?
  - Is the objective appropriate for the work level?
  - Does the objective meet the “SMART+” criteria?
- Provide ideas for improvement, if possible
- Make revisions to your objectives based on the feedback provided

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Final Review

- Discuss any revisions you've made based on your partner's feedback
  - Look at one set of objectives at a time
- Discuss thoughts together
- Decide on best option and finalize

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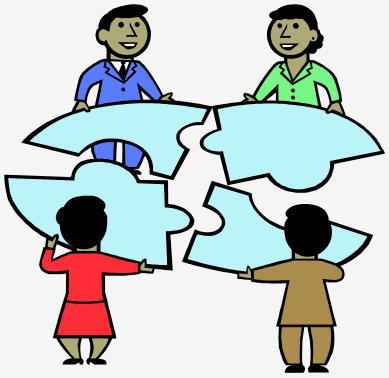
Group Review



- Share an example with the group
- Ask the following questions:
  - Can the objective be understood without having in-depth knowledge of the job?
  - Is the objective appropriate for the work level?
  - Does the objective meet the “SMART+” criteria?

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Summary and Final Questions

- The resources provided today are meant to help you write effective performance objectives that meet the SMART criteria
  - Remember to use the guidebook as a resource when you need a refresher on the process or when you need ideas for how to write a challenging objective
  - The peer review process we used today can be extremely valuable
    - In the future, use your co-workers as a resource and write your objectives together if it makes the process easier
- Do you have any final questions?

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Resources and Contact Information

- For additional information on DCIPS, please visit: www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/index.aspx
- To access the performance objectives repository, please visit: http://demo.pdri.com/odni/objectives/
- Civilian Personnel Advisory Center [contact info]
- You may also contact [your name here] for additional questions regarding resources at [email]

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End of Workshop

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Instructor Guide & Workshop Protocol

- Format of the instructor guide
  - Logistics and workshop prep information
  - Workshop Protocol
    - **Bolded** wording indicates what you will communicate to the workshop participants
    - *Italicized* wording provides instructions for you
    - You DO NOT need to memorize this word-for-word, but make sure you cover all of the points for each slide
  - Resources
  - Common questions

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Facilitating the Workshop

- What questions do you have about facilitating the content?
  - What do you expect to be the easiest portion of the workshop?
  - What do you expect to be the hardest portion of the workshop?
  - What questions do you expect participants to ask?

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Common Questions

- Measurement
  - Most people assume that measurement means hard numbers or percentages
    - Encourage them to consider whether there is a tracking system in place and the burden that will be placed on the rater if numbers are used
    - Refer to the quality dimensions on page 8 of the guidebook for other measurement options
  - Employee does not know how many times he/she will have to do “X”
    - Write a Recurring Objective instead of a Non-recurring Objective
  - The measurement required is subjective
    - Do the best you can to make it objective and then recognize that there has to be a conversation between the rater and employee about standards/expectations for more subjective requirements

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Common Questions

- Achievable
  - Employee is not responsible for the final product
    - Talk them through the pieces of the final product that are within their control and write the objective around those pieces
  - The employee has to obtain information from others in order to complete the product
    - Build in a caveat and a requirement that the employee elevate any issues with obtaining information to his/her supervisor within a given timeframe
  - Work is completed by a team and it is too hard to distinguish individual contributions
    - Do your best to tease out individual responsibilities
    - Suggest an objective that the individual could complete related to his/her role (e.g., design a checklist for the team to use that leads to greater quality/efficiency)

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Common Questions

- Relevant
  - It is not clear how an objective relates to a higher level goal
    - Suggest that the employee identify how his/her objective relates to someone else's objectives (e.g., supervisor) and then which higher level goal can be related to that individual's work
- Time-bound
  - Project work extends beyond the rating period and the final product will not be finished in this timeframe
    - Write one or more objectives for milestones in the project that will occur within the rating period
- Capturing the work
  - Concerns over covering the entire job in 3 – 5 objectives
    - Objectives are only part of the performance evaluation; how other aspects of the work are performed is rated using the performance elements
    - Write a more global objective about how similar types of work will be completed (e.g., all reports meet X criteria)

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Instructor Resources

- Guide to Writing Effective Performance Objectives
  - Read this document cover to cover
- Performance Objectives Repository http://demo.pdri.com/odni/objectives/
  - If you will be teaching employees in a certain occupation, you can use the repository to pull relevant example objectives ahead of time
- Army Policy Volume 2011 DCIPS Performance Management http://www.dami.army.pentagon.mil/site/dcips/policy.aspx
  - Workshop participants sometimes ask general questions about DCIPS; it is helpful to understand the policy behind the performance management process and have a copy available during the workshop

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Instructor Resources

- Occupational structure information
  (http://dcips.mil/documents/Occupational_Structure_FS.pdf)
  (http://dcips.dtic.mil/payband.html)
  - Page 18 in the guidebook discusses how to write objectives appropriate to a work level
  - You may be asked how these relate to pay bands and work categories

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Reviewing and Editing Objectives

- This can be the most challenging and unpredictable aspect of the workshop from an instructor perspective
  - It takes practice and a little bit of problem solving
  - Providing advice on improving the objective can be particularly challenging if you do not know much about the job
- Practice with “Before and After” objectives

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Before…

- Army Supervisor:
  - Create a positive working environment through adherence to merit and EEO principals conducting three Directorate Wide structured meetings and one Directorate Wide team building activity that would cover topics such as Consideration of Others, Similarity or Group Communications. This supports the organizational goal to foster a culture of innovation and high performance.

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After…

- Army Supervisor:
  - Conduct three directorate-wide structured meetings and one directorate-wide team building activity covering topics such as Consideration of Others, Similarity, or Group Communications within the rating period. The meetings and activity should result in the majority of participants expressing positive employee feedback and employee comprehension of EEO principles as determined by feedback evaluation forms and an end of activity worksheet that you design to check understanding. This supports the organizational goal to foster a culture of innovation and high performance.

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Before

- Analyst (Full Performance)
  - In accordance with command priorities, during this performance period, produce 3 to 5 intelligence notes or other products as coordinated in command production plans.

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After…

- Analyst (Full Performance)
  - In accordance with command priorities, produce three to five intelligence notes or other products during the rating period as coordinated in command production plans. Products must meet Intelligence Community Directive (ICD) 203 standards, will be delivered in the timeframe specified in the plan, and will require only minimal revision as determined by supervisor review. This supports the goal of X.

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Before…

- Senior Intelligence Officer
  - Provide guidance and assistance to key leadership and staff of subordinate activities on matters relating to intelligence and security programs under the purview of the organization. Visit 75% of all Research, Development, Engineering Centers and Laboratories by the end of the rating period to address leadership concerns over matters such as subcommand intelligence and security support infrastructure, resourcing, intelligence/security personnel management and training.

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After…

- Senior Intelligence Officer
  - In support of the organization’s mission to provide guidance and assistance to key leadership and staff on matters relating to intelligence and security programs, visit 75% of all Research, Development, and Engineering Centers and Laboratories by the end of the rating period to address employee concerns. For each completed visit, submit a trip report that includes a detailed summary and substantive recommendations for improvement to supervisor within the agreed upon timeframe.

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Before…

- Security Specialist (Senior):
  - Conduct SAVs and SAPIs assigned by supervisor during FY10 of subordinate activities of the command. Provide inspection report of findings and observations to commander and the Director of Inspection 30 days after completion of inspection.

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After…

- Security Specialist (Senior):
  - Conduct Security Assistance Visits (SAVs) and Special Access Programs (SAPIs) to inspect subordinate activities of the command as assigned by your supervisor during FY10. Provide an inspection report , documenting findings and observations, in the required format to the commander and the Director of Inspection within 30 days after completion of inspection. This supports the requirements specified by the command.

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Before…

- Human Capital (Supervisor)
  - All subordinates will receive training in accordance with established position standards and employee individual development plans. Subordinates will complete all admin training by required dates. Exceptions will be identified and justified. Supports work unit goal to provide career development for employees.

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After…

- Human Capital (Supervisor)
  - During the rating period, provide at least two training opportunities to each subordinate in accordance with established position standards and employees' individual development plans during the rating period. Meet with at least 95% of subordinates on a quarterly basis to ensure he/she is aware of and completing required training. Document the review session, identifying and justifying any exceptions. This supports work unit goal to provide professional development to employees.

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Summary

- The T3 workshop is meant to provide you with a comprehensive set of tools and resources you can use to conduct your own workshops
- However, you should make this workshop your own
  - Tweak it as needed to ensure you are comfortable with the material and that it fits your audience

- Questions?

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Thank you

- Thank you for your participation
- For questions or comments about the workshop, please contact:

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